YĀTHINI.

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Adjacent to and on the southern side of Basin, a village about three miles west of Gilgit, there stands a cliff at the junction of the Kargah and Naupur nullahs. A large image of an erect Buddha has been sculptured on the rock-face, about 30 feet above the ground. It is without doubt a sculpture of ancient date and shows that the valley was once inhabited by a race professing Buddhism. The people call it "Yāthini" (giantess), and relate an interesting story about it. They say that she was the sister of Shri Badat, a King of Gilgit who was the descendant of giants. She lived on the said rock and, being a man-eater like her brother, was in the habit of killing and devouring half as many of the men as happened to pass by, leaving the other half unmolested. The princess continued this practice for a long period, to the great distress of the inhabitants, until a certain Danyal named Soglio, feeling the loss of so many people dear to his heart, devised a successful plan of murdering her in order to save his beloved countrymen. With the above design in his mind he set out for the place with a party of brave and bold men. Reaching the spot he burnt a small fire at the foot of the said rock, and his companions took their seat around it in a small circle. The Danyal, according to his usual custom, put some *chili* (juniper) leaves on the fire and inhaled its smoke. Thus driving himself into a state of ecstacy, he commenced dancing and singing some magic incantations, which were repeated by his companions. The Yāthini was elated at the prospect of more victims. As soon as she approached the Danyal he stepped forward and addressed her in a song, of which the following is a translation :—

"Have not you heard, O lovely princess, that your father has expired to-day?" Hearing this sad news, she struck her breast with her right hand. Soglio, who had with him some long iron nails, thrust one of them through her hand, as it lay on her breast, with such rapidity and strength that the nail penetrated her chest and went far into the rock behind. Soglio then sang another song, in which he sang as follows :—"Have not you heard, O charming princess, that your brother has also died to-day? On this she struck her second hand on her thigh. Soglio quickly pierced this with another sharp nail. The Yāthini was thus firmly fixed to the rock, and was unable to move, or to take revenge. The party was much delighted at this success of the Danyal who further turned her into a stone by his prayer, and even more delighted were the inhabitants when they heard of the good news. The unfortunate Soglio requested the people to bury him on his death near the Yāthini, as otherwise she would return to life and continue her cruelties. The people, who had now obtained their desire, held a private council to discuss the matter. They argued that no one could tell when and where Soglio would die, and whether they would be alive or able to procure his body at the time, should he die in some far-away country or by drowning in the river; in which case the Yāthini would recommence her practices with renewed ferocity. After a long debate they thought it best to assassinate Soglio at once. A man was appointed to accomplish the horrible task, which he did, and Soglio was at the same time buried close to the figure on the rock.

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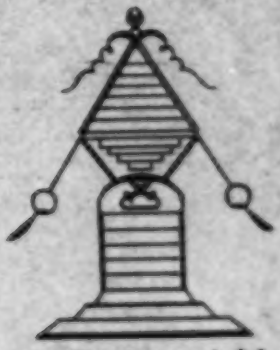
000 "Shri Bai" ceremony, performed with a slight difference at Nangrau, will be dealt with separately.

Sculptured Stones.*

532 174 778 On the bank of the Indus river a big stone is seen about a mile's distance from the entrance of Botugah Nullah (Chilas Nullah) where there stand some boatmen's huts. It bears a figure of a Buddhist *Manc* [?]. The carving begins a little above the foot of the stone. In height it is a little larger than a man. Though faintly engraved, it is so skilfully whitened that, although it has been exposed for so long a time to the action



of the weather, its white colour is still to be remarked from a distance. On this rock there are also many other figures of the same kind, but they are somewhat smaller in size than the one above mentioned. Some two or three miles below this place, there are numerous stones of various sizes on the river bank bearing the figures of goats and markhors, &c. Some of the stones show representations of axes, while the others are those of deer. At some places the carvings are seen on the top of a stone as well as on its sides. The same kind of figures are also seen in the Bagrot Valley engraved on rock-faces between the Sanikar and Bukchi villages.[1]

At Barmas, near Damot, in the Sai valley, there are two pictures of Buddha. One is carved on a stone, and the other is a painting of Buddha sitting among his disciples.

At another place, in the neighbourhood of Chilas, there is a rock still larger in size, and on its river side there are a good many figures. There are also two or three carvings of temples with a large number of men, goats, horses and cows, &c., engraved on them. On this stone there is an inscription written in some ancient character. The same carvings are noticed far some way along the river, which have does not rise sufficiently in summer to do them any injury. It shows that in a certain period, this part of Chilas was inhabited by Buddhists. The inhabitants of Chilas are under the impression that all these inscriptions are made by the fairies.* The tradition is that in ancient times the land was

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[1] These villages are situated in the Lasper Valley.

*[A similar belief is held by the Malyas (Mohammedans) of Lower Hunza and Nagyung regarding the "Chung Pesh" (Chinese) and certain clay tablets of Buddhistic origin found in caves. See Studies, Asian, 1900, No. 10[illegible]—Ed.]

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*[See also p. 118 section—Ed.]

frequently visited by fairies who used to make these inscriptions, as in the opinion of the Chilasis it is beyond man's power to produce such inscriptions. It is also affirmed that these fairies were seen in those days by all men, but nowadays they are visible to no one except to a great Mullah by dint of his miracles. The Bagrot people say that the carvings were inscribed on stones by the fairies on the night of "Shivo Baromo;" and that on the same night the fairies frequently used to rub away the figures from one stone and to engrave the same on another.

THE CEREMONY OF SRI KOH.

Sri Koh is said to be the sister of Nagi Sochomi, and lived at Shankank, a village near Gashi in the District of Astore. The villagers used to present grain to this goddess and prayed before her asst for the supply of their wants. Her followers were strictly prohibited from keeping cows, or drinking their milk, and were under the impression that by so doing they were apt to lose their flocks, herds, or the produce of their lands.

"JAMESHE" AND "DEWESHE."

At Gilgit proper and in the surrounding villages there are seen two small tracts of land called "Jaishish" and "Deweshe." The former is situated on the river bank and the latter at the foot of a hill, except at some places in which they both are found at the foot of a hill. In ancient times, when Islam had not spread to these parts, the tribes used to burn the dead at "Jaishish," and a few days after they gathered and carried away the bones to "Deweshe," where they buried them in one pit. Remnants of bones still exist these places, though the traces have almost been obliterated by time. In these circumstances, however, one is not wrong in supposing that Mohammedanism is of recent growth.

Several old men still living at Gilgit relate that they used to play with the bones, bangles and rings which they found in "Jaishish;" but to carry away such articles to their houses was considered improper. From this it appears that the dead bodies were buried with their ornaments.

SAMIRA VILLAGE AND A "CHINAR" TREE.

There is a small populous village named Samira in the Bagrot Valley. It is said that when this tract was lying waste, a Fakir named Shah Beyya passed through and halted there for a short time. Becoming thirsty and finding no water, he prayed to God for a good supply. His prayer was granted, and a sufficient quantity of water burst forth from an adjacent hill. After a few days Shah Beyya felt the heat of the sun, and planting his stick, which was of *chinar* wood, deep into the ground, prayed again to the Almighty to make it into a large *chinar* tree. This prayer was also granted, and a big tree grew, under whose shadow he afterwards used to sit. The branches of this tree are said to have been once so large and sprawling that they touched the neighbouring hill about two yards distant, across the Bagrot Nullah. The tree was afterwards burnt by the Mongols, but after a short period five shoots sprang out from its trunk, and these are still to be seen, forming an enclosure about 30 yards wide.